

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Public Health Announces New Underage Drinking and Driving Prevention Program**

San Bernardino, CA – The San Bernardino County Department of Public Health today announced a new project to reduce injuries and fatalities in San Bernardino County caused by underage drinking and driving. The program is paid for by a grant from the state Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

“This is great news for San Bernardino County,” said James Felten, Public Health Director. “Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of unintentional death and injury to youth between 16 to 20 years of age. Alcohol is the primary cause in the majority of these crashes. In 2004, 173 San Bernardino County drivers under 21 years of age were killed or injured in alcohol-involved crashes”.

The project will involve youth performing skits on preventing teenage drinking and driving at local high schools. The project will also educate parents on reducing teen access to alcohol, and will implement a “Don’t Be A Pour Provider” campaign to inform persons over 21 of the legal ramifications of providing alcohol to underage youth.

“We are always looking at ways we can help cities and communities prevent crashes among young people,” said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the Office of Traffic Safety, which funded the grant

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through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "This grant provides a number of tools to reach school-age youth."

The Department of Public Health in partnership with California State University, San Bernardino Coyote Conservatory for the Arts will be providing an 8-week course in improvisational theater for youth who are interested in using drama to educate other youth to prevent harmful behaviors and promote positive alternatives. The group performances will be available to high schools and community events in different areas of the county. The classes will begin on January 12, 2006 from 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Classes are free to all program participants. The program is available to all youth residing in San Bernardino County. For more information or youth registration call (909) 387-6280.

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